Eng 361 The Development of Poetry: Four Modernist American Poets
Spring 2016 • M W 2-3:15 pm • Room: CRT 368

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Office hours: M 1-2, W 3:30-4:30 and by appointment

DESCRIPTION
This course is an intensive introduction to the works of four modernist poets, each representing a very different kind of modernist poetry, and all most active between roughly 1910 and 1960: Langston Hughes, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, and Elizabeth Bishop. The course will combine intensive close reading of individual poems with a more general consideration of historical and cultural issues relevant for each poet. These include Hughes’s participation in the “Harlem Renaissance,” Williams’s career as a doctor, Bishop’s residence in Brazil, and Stevens’s debts to several key philosophers. By the end of the semester, students will have gained skills and techniques for reading all poetry, a fuller sense of the development of modernist poetics in the first half of the twentieth century, and detailed knowledge of four influential writers.

TEXTS
Elizabeth Bishop, Poems, ISBN 0374532362 ($16)
Langston Hughes, The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes ISBN 0679764089 ($20)
William Carlos Williams, Selected Poems ISBN 081120958X ($17)
Selected readings on D2L

REQUIREMENTS
Participation in discussion (10 percent); D2L contributions (10 percent); three critical papers (15, 20 and 25 percent respectively); final exam (20 percent).

Late papers will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for each day late.

Three unexcused absences are permitted. The final course grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade for each additional absence.

Workload statement: This class meets twice a week for 75 minutes per meeting for a total of 37.5 hours of classroom time. You should expect to spend two hours preparing for each class, and an additional 5-8 hours on each of the three papers and the final exam. In total,
this class will likely take between 132.5 and 144.5 hours of time. Workloads vary, and students are assessed on their performance, not on time invested.

ASSIGNMENTS

Ten D2L Posts: for each class, one poem in the selected readings appears in the syllabus in **bold face type and underlined**. Over the course of the term, students will post a total of TEN response to either one of the two assigned poems each week. The response should raise a difficult question about a poem, or attempts to make some progress in answering a question that someone else has posted. Responses should be between about 100 and 300 words long. Response must be submitted no later than 9 am on the day we are scheduled to discuss the poem. Read all responses before class for the day that you post.

Three short critical papers: the first concentrates on close-reading skills. The second and third are 4-6 pp. critical papers. Each paper must be on the work of a single poet. No two papers may be on the same poet. Paper topics will be distributed in advance. Students may write on a topic of their own choice, provided they discuss it with the instructor at least one week before it is due.

Final exam: an in-class author-identification and commentary exam on the works of the four poets covered in the course. The final exam rewards those who have done the reading and studied throughout the course. Keep up.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

All cases of academic misconduct will be addressed strictly in terms of university policies. According to those policies, academic misconduct includes: “cheating on an examination; collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course; submitting a paper or assignment as one’s own work when a part or all of the paper or assignment is the work of another.” For more information see:

http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm

POLICIES

No audio or video recordings of class lecture or discussion without instructor’s permission.

Instructor will make every effort to respond to email within 24 hours.

University policies regarding this and other UWM courses can be found at: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news_events/upload/Syllabus-Links.pdf

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Mon Jan 25: Introduction
American modernism in context
UNIT 1: LANGSTON HUGHES

Wed Jan 27: Hughes: Introduction

Mon Feb 1: Hughes: Musical Hughes

Wed Feb 3: Hughes: Populist and Radical

Mon Feb 8: Hughes: Alberta K. Johnson

Wed Feb 10: Hughes: Montage of a Dream Deferred
“Dream Boogie” (388) TO “Tag” (409) [Commentary Poem: “Dancer” (400)]

Mon Feb 15: Hughes: Montage of a Dream Deferred
“Theme for English B” (409) TO “Island [2]” (429)

UNIT 2: WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

Wed Feb 17: Williams: Spring

Mon Feb 22: Williams: Imagism and Minimalism
the Sea” (91), “Locust Tree in Flower (first version)” (93), “Locust Tree in Flower (second version)” (94), “Jersey Lyric” (252)

**Wed Feb 24: Williams: Proletarian Portraits**

**Mon Feb 29: Williams: Death and Loss**

***FIRST PAPER DUE***

**Wed March 2: Williams: On Art and Poetry**

**Mon March 7: Williams, Paterson Book I**
Preface (ix-xii), “A Statement by William Carlos Williams about the Poem Patterson” (xiii-xv), Paterson, from Book 1, pp 2-28 [D2L] [Select any short section for D2L posts]

**Wed March 9: Williams, Paterson Book I**
Paterson, from Book 1, pp. 29-40 [D2L] [Select any short section for D2L posts]

***Spring Break***

**UNIT 3 ELIZABETH BISHOP**

**Mon March 21: Bishop: North and South**

**Wed March 23: Bishop: A Cold Spring**

**Mon March 28: Bishop: Travel and Geography**
“Arrival at Santos” (87), “Brazil, January 1, 1502” (89), “Questions of Travel” (91), “Crusoe in England” (162)

**Wed March 30: Bishop: Reticence**
Mon April 4: Bishop: Precision and Form

***SECOND PAPER DUE***

Wed April 6: Bishop: Portraits of Poverty

Mon April 11: Bishop: Animals

UNIT 4 WALLACE STEVENS

Wed April 13: Stevens: Harmonium

Mon April 18: Stevens: Downward to Darkness
“A High-Toned Old Christian Woman” (62), “Sunday Morning” (71) [For D2L posts, pick any ONE section for comment], “The Bird with the Coppery, Keen Claws” (87)

Wed April 20: Stevens: Ideas of Order in the 1930s

Mon April 25: Stevens: Blue Guitarist
“The Man with the Blue Guitar” (175) [For D2L posts, pick any ONE section for comment]

Wed April 29: Stevens: Poems of the Mind

Mon May 2: Stevens: Supreme Fiction
“Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction” (401-32) [For D2L posts, pick any ONE of the sections numbered with roman numerals for comment]
**Wed May 4: Stevens: Autumn of Life**

**Mon May 9: Summary and Overview**
No readings. Final exam prep and review. Please bring all books to class.

***THIRD PAPER DUE***

***Final Exam: Wed May 18, 12:30-2:30 pm, CRT 368***